

An Inspiration Received During Meditation.

SIR,—The following thoughts which were impressed on me recently may be helpful to some of your readers:—

'That you may realise deeper spirituality at the times of sacred communion, you should strive to make your own conditions by exalting the soul unto the eternal Father of Love; and although this divine attitude is a holy exercise which is not perfectible in a day, yet by prayer and aspiration unto the Highest your soul shall become attuned to the Infinite.

'Practise, then, His holy presence, and during your times of meditation cease to think of all but Him and His ministers from the angelic realms of light; so will your thoughts more fully exalt your soul to knowledge of at-one-ment with the Divine, and His holy ones will the more readily "enter in" to administer such spiritual food as you are able to receive.

'Strive earnestly to attain to these spiritual heights that you may better know yourself as in His sight, and thus build a wall of safety, so that naught that is defiling can touch your soul.

'Keep unspotted from the world. Cherish the body in purity and love, that your spirit may manifest its highest expressions of "the Christ within," and so shall its unfoldment become radiant with love divine. May the great Father keep you as a flower of His garden, ever unfolding the petals of love and service to all around.'—Yours, &c.,

JULIA SCHOLEY.

Are Breathing Exercises Injurious?

SIR,—Having read recommendations to practise deep breathing for health and psychic well-being, I followed the advice, as far as I could, with, I think, beneficial results. Now, however, a friend warns me against breathing exercises, and sends me a pamphlet in which the writer warns readers to beware of all use of psychic powers, advises the discontinuance of breathing exercises, and gives extracts from letters from persons who declare that they have been injured by regular in-and-out deep breathing and yoga methods—which latter, one affirms, were injurious, 'not only mentally, but in every other way,' and caused persons who practised them to become 'physical wrecks.' I am quite in sympathy with 'putting your foot down strongly on the practice of Black Magic in every form,' but was not aware that rational, steady, deep breathing, or the exercise of psychic powers within reasonable limits, was black or any other kind of magic. On reading carefully I found that the writer of the pamphlet has a course of instruction to sell (at a cost of several pounds), and now I am wondering what the truth may be regarding the value or otherwise of deep breathing and the use of psychic power. Perhaps some readers of 'LIGHT' will kindly, and briefly, give me the benefit of their experience.—Yours, &c.,

BREATHER.

The Problems of Personality and Possession.

SIR,—In the review of my book 'Possessed' appearing in your issue of November 30th, you question whether any 'basis in fact' exists for the contention 'that a powerful disembodied personality can obsess an innocent man, however weak, against his will.'

If by 'basis in fact' you mean actual identification of the obsessing personality, the question is, obviously, outside discussion. If, however, deductive reasoning from established premises ranks as 'basis in fact,' then your observation, 'we doubt that any such basis exists,' goes by the board.

Every open-minded student or observer of (to use conventional terms) occult or psychic phenomena encounters instances of dual, triple and even quadruple personalities in the one individual. There are numberless instances recorded on the authority of observers who are not always predisposed towards non-materialistic opinions. In his 'Psychology,' William James supplies an example in the Bourne-Brown case. A young man named Bourne, living a steady, everyday existence, disappeared. In another neighbourhood a young man named Brown appeared, started a business and lived a steady, everyday existence. One day Brown, in a state of agitation, startled his neighbours and acquaintances by professing to have no knowledge of himself as Brown and declaring that his name was Bourne. He was regarded as mad until he was identified by his friends as Bourne, the man who had disappeared. What had happened to him from the time he disappeared as Bourne he had no recollection; yet as Brown he had acted rationally, consistently, sanely.

This is a typical instance. Regarding the physical man as a materialistic manifestation, was he Bourne or was he Brown? The mechanism of the brain was set going and kept working—by what? Judged by conduct, character, individual idiosyncrasies, Bourne was not Brown nor was Brown Bourne. But the physical man was always the same. Wherefore we arrive at the point which is the dominant note in my book, 'Possessed'—which is it, the brain, or the power behind the brain, which makes

the personality? In the example I quote there is no indication of Brown until (let us say) he had obsessed Bourne; there is no indication of Brown after the obsession ceased. I have sought to 'state a case' containing both the preceding and succeeding indications in my book 'Possessed.'

You apparently regard it as a sort of Christmas ghost story. May I say that it was written as an effort to present, in popular form, a logical statement of the conflicting materialistic and non-materialistic views of the human personality?—Yours, &c.,

London.

FIRTH SCOTT.

Mr. Hereward Carrington and the Bangs Sisters.

SIR,—As you have closed the correspondence on the above subject, I am not going to enter into any controversial matter, but merely to make a statement as an act of justice to Mr. Carrington.

In Appendix (C.) to my book I have thrown out doubts of Mr. Carrington having been inside the Bangs Sisters' houses. After discussing the pros and cons I wound up with the following sentence: 'However, I would fain believe that, owing to so long a time having elapsed . . . the Bangs Sisters may possibly have forgotten what sitters they received on a certain date. . . Let us try and credit that he *did* go into the séance room . . .' (page 625). I am pleased to say that this pious wish has been translated into fact. A mutual friend remonstrated with me for doubting Mr. Carrington's *bona fides*, and I suggested to him that there was a simple way of proving that his friend had sat with May Bangs. If Mr. Carrington would procure from Dr. Funk's executors the original letter that he found between the closed slates, I would compare the handwriting with that of my letters obtained in a somewhat similar way. This letter has been sent, and I have compared it: the writing, in my opinion, is practically the same as in my letters.

I am, therefore, prepared to assert that Mr. Carrington did sit with May Bangs and, in reply to a letter from himself to his 'Dearest mother, Jane Thompson' (who never existed), did receive a reply addressed to 'Dearly Loved Son Harold,' in affectionate terms, from his devoted mother, 'Jane Thompson.'

As I took a number of precautions that Mr. Carrington did not, which included sitting between May Bangs and the suspected door, and using my own chemical ink, slates, marked paper, and so forth, I am as certain that my letters are genuine spirit-manifestations as I am that his was intended to make a fool of him.

Unless Mr. Carrington desires to pursue the controversy in some other journal, I do not propose to refer to the matter again. Dr. Funk is dead. 'The Annals of Psychical Science' (English version) is also defunct, and few investigators care a button about the matter. In the next edition of 'Glimpses of the Next State' I shall delete those passages which contain doubts as to Mr. Carrington having been inside the house.—Yours, &c.,

W. USBORNE MOORE.

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Ought We to Pray for Rain?

SIR,—'Give us this day our daily bread.' So runs the prayer that every Christian knows by heart, and simple-minded people might be inclined to think that as bread depends directly upon rain in due season, we, as Christians, might consider ourselves entitled to pray for rain. Not so, however, for in 'LIGHT' of November 16th we learn from a report of a sermon by the Rev. G. C. Sharpe, a Unitarian minister in South Africa, that for the South African Government to advise the people to pray for rain and to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer is to aim a blow at science, and to reflect seriously upon man, God, and religion. Is this really so? I am well aware that in these enlightened (?) days to pray for rain is regarded as a superstition which the advanced 'Liberal' thinker can afford to despise. Such a belief, we are told, is contrary to science, for it 'asks us to set aside the truth that the world is an orderly universe in which conditions govern events.'

I have been myself a student of natural science for many years, but hitherto I have not come across any valid reason to justify the phrase 'intellectual atavism' as applied to this belief. It may be true that nothing to be found in the text books of natural science gives us any ground for believing that psychic or spiritual influences affect the course of events in the physical world. But then, on the subject of the psychic and the spiritual, as we all know, science is, for the most part, silent, not having yet made the metaphysics of ultimate causation its province. For my part, I know not what may be the limitations of that supra-physical world which I believe to exist, nor how great nor how little may be its power to influence this one, though I suspect that power to be great. Such being the case, I do not care to take up the position of those who consider themselves wise enough to define and limit the power of Omnipotence.